उपसभापति : आप सवाल पूछिए, आप पालिसी पर मत बोलिए ।

श्री चिमनभाई मेहता : वही तो मैं बोल रहा हूं ।

उपसभापति : आप जरा कह दीजिए कि वट इज द प्राब्लम ।

श्री चिमनभाई मेहता : हिन्दुस्तान में सब से ज्यादा गुजरात की चाय के बारे में है । इसकी जानकारी के हिसाब से कह सकता हूं अगर टी-सेंटर वहां खोला जाएगा तो जनता को चाय सस्ते में उपलब्ध होगी और प्रोड्यूसर्ज को ज्यादा फायदा होगा ?

उपसभापति : टी-सेंटर नहीं खोल रहे हैं ।

श्री चिमनभाई मेहता : आप इस बारे में कहिए ?

श्री कमालुद्दीन अहमद : मैंने शुरू में ही कहा कि अगर गुजरात गवर्नमेंट की तरफ से कोई ऐसी रिक्वेस्ट आती है तो टी-बोर्ड उस पर गौर करने के लिए तैयार है और गौर करेगा कोई ऐसी बात नहीं है कि कहीं से सेंटर खोलने की रिक्वेस्ट हो, कहीं से रिक्वेस्ट की गई हो और उस रेक्वेस्ट को एंटरटेन नहीं किया गया हो । *(Interruptions)* ...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order please. The Minister has answered that there are certain procedures. If the various States applied, they would do it. Let them ask for it.

Next Question.

Decision on the expert committee report on Public Distribution System

*144. **SHRI M. A. BABY** : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken any decision on the Experts Committee report for the restructuring of the Public Distribution System ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, by when Government propose to take a final decision on the said report ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (c) The report of the Committee of Minister on National Policy on Public distribution System (PDS) has been received by the Government and was considered by the Advisory Council on PDS at its meeting held on 22-9-93. The Advisory Council was unanimous in its opinion that the report would require further consultation with the States. Considering the importance of the matter, the Council resolved that the report may be referred to the National Development Council for their consideration and for evolving acceptable policy guidelines/on PDS. Government will take a decision after getting the recommendation of the National Development Council (NDS).

SHRI M. A. BABY : Madam, from the reply it is obvious that there is some delay taking place in taking a decision at the Government level and there is nothing strange for the present Cabinet taking no decisions or delaying decisions. It has become a hallmark of the present Cabinet led by Shri Narasimha Rao to ensure that decisions are delayed to the extent possible.

Madam, the importance of taking a decision in this matter is very crucial because in a large country like ours a huge segment of population lives below the poverty line. The effective working of the public distribution system is to ensure that at least a subsistence is given to a majority of the poor people in our country. Madam, it is known that the existing public distribution system hardly covers a sizeable section of our population. Except for a State like Kerala, the public distribution system itself is not effective in most parts of our country.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Will you please put a question ? No, you are not putting a question.

SHRI M. A. BABY : I am building my case.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No, not in a Question Hour.

SHRI M.A. BABY : I am directly coming to the question. Today only I have received information that in one village of Kerala—the hon. Cabinet Minister is aware of this in Noolpuzha, Waynad district, which is an Adivasi area, more than 15 people have died in the recent past and most of them have died due to malnutrition and non-availability of foodgrains. This is the situation existing in our country. I do not have to refer to Kalahandi. Therefore, first of all, I would like to know, what are the main recommendations of this Committee, what is the general response of the Government toward most of the recommendations and what are the proposals in the recommendations in order to ensure....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Are you putting both the supplementaries together ?

SHRI M.A. BABY : No, Madam, these are parts (a), (b) and (c).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No, I will not permit. I have many names with me.

SHRI M.A. BABY : I will confine to parts (a) and (b) of my supplementary. What are the main recommendations of the Committee ? What are the proposals to ensure that poor people are covered by the PDS ?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : First of all I would like to clarify that there is no delay on the part of the Government in implementing the recommendations. This delay is because the PDS Advisory Committee itself has, in a unanimous resolution, requested the Government that since the matter is very important, before taking a final decision it should be referred to the NDC. As soon as the NDC's recommendations are given, we will take a decision about that. Regarding the important recommendations. I will briefly state them : (1) At least 20 kilograms per month should be made available to evry needy family.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : 20 kilograms of what ?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : 20 kilograms of foodgrains—wheat and rice, (2) The Central Government should issue guidelines on the categories to be excluded as discussed about—(i) income tax assessees (ii) professionals like doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, architects, engineers, etc. (iii) sales tax assessees (iv) all those registered under the Shops and Establishments Act (v) employees of Government, public sector and private sector (vi) for the rural areas, categories other than landless labourers, rural artisans, share-croppers, small and marginal farmers and families defined as eligible for the benefit under the IRDP and others in similar economic conditions. (3) The quantity of foodgrains and other commodities being issued by the Central Government to the different States and UTs should not be reduced but they have to be increased where necessary as it would otherwise defeat the purpose of more meaningful quantities being delivered to the needy and the deserving. (4) State Governments and UT Administrations ... (*Interruptions*) ...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You can lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : Details I will lay.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Not only what is important but even the details.

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : Details I will lay ... (*Interruptions*) ...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : It should have come in the written reply.

SHRI M.A. BABY : Madam. I thank the Minister for giving this information and I have to appreciate it that it is proposed to be discussed at National Development Council. I would like to request the Minister that after having discussed it at the National Development Council, both the Houses of Parliament should also discuss this matter because it is of crucial importance.

Madam, there are many suggestions coming from outside with regard to economic subsidies in order to sustain the Public

Distribution System and things like that. I wish the Government resists such directions whether it is from the World Bank or the IMF and so on. At this rate they may perhaps suggest that through the Public Distribution System, ten rupee chicken, Campa Cola, Coca Cola and, perhaps, music cassettes of Michael Jackson should also be distributed—I don't know. But I wish that the Government will resist such pressure. I would like to ask the Minister whether there would be special care taken to ensure the reach of the Public Distribution System when riots or other disturbances take place in different parts of the country due to the activities of certain communal forces. This is often happening in our country when curfew is imposed. So, will there be a mechanism developed as part of the Public Distribution System so that daily necessities would be made available to people on such occasions ?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : There is no direction to this Government from any quarter to weaken the Public Distribution System. Another thing : Whoever tries to direct, as far as this Government is concerned, we are very clear in our mind. We are here for the PDS, we will strengthen the PDS. we will not be a party to weaken the PDS. Regarding providing facilities to meet the requirements when there are riots and other things, the Government is now advising the State Governments to have more storage facilities even in the interior areas and, with the cooperation of the State Governments we think that the Central Government will be able to have more storage facilities in almost all the remotest areas of this country. That step is taken on an urgent basis.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Mr. Deputy Chairman, the hon. Minister has explained about the eligibility of the persons to get the goods under the PDS system. The basic problem is about the quality of the foodgrains supplied to the people under the PDS system.

Not only that, but there are leakages in the distribution of the materials by the PDS shops. There are a lot of complaints. Persons go to get the public distribution system materials, especially wheat, rice, kerosene and other things. Each shop has been assigned 500 cards. They have to give these materials for the entire month. If they go on the third day of the week, the distributer says that the materials have been totally exhausted, and the people return with empty hands. Basic problems of this kind are there.

A Ministerial committee is also there. The hon. Member wanted to know about the recommendations of the Experts Committee. The Ministerial Committee is different. That is for the purpose of eligibility. What happened to the Experts Committee that has been appointed by the Government? I would like to know whether the Minister has applied his mind to this aspect for the purpose of having a foolproof public distribution system.

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : The PDS in India is working on a joint responsibility basis. The Central Government is responsible for the procurement, storage and distribution of bulk quantities of the PDS like rice, wheat, kerosene and soft coke to the State Governments. The entire operational responsibility at the field level is with the State Governments. We are having regular interaction with the State Governments regarding that. We are regularly advising the State Governments that they should have regular inspection in the PDS and other areas, that they should have some vigilance committee on the FPS basis and that wherever they find diversion of the PDS articles and other malpractices in the PDS, they should take stringent action under the Essential Commodities Act. This way the Central Government is monitoring it, and we are coordinating with the State Governments on this.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Madam, there is a general complaint about the Quality of the foodgrains supplied. He cannot pass this responsibility on to the State Government.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Quality control.

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : The FCI distributes them to the State Governments. Before delivery the State authorities have the right to verify them. If they are not of good quality, they have the right to reject them. It is the duty of the State Government only to take a decision on this. This is the actual practice of the PDS.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Good.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : उपसभापति महोदया, जो एक्सपर्ट कमेटी की राय है उसके दो हिस्से हैं। एक हिस्सा जो है रिलेटेड टू स्टेट गवर्नमेंट, That should go to the State Government. They have decided rightly about it. लेकिन, दूसरा पार्ट जो है वह गवर्नमेंट के डायरेक्ट एक्शन का है, सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट का। ..... they have nothing to do with, say, the quantum of rice or any other material to be supplied. यह तो आपके जिम्मे है, मैं इस सवाल को इसलिए उठा रहा हूं कि बहुत ज्यादा बोगस कार्ड लोगों के पास हैं और बोगस कार्ड रखने का एकमात्र कारण है,

The only reason is that the quantum supplied is so low that they have to go to the black market. So, this part of the recommendation, that is, 20 kg., as you have said, is directly related to the Central Government. The State Governments have nothing to do with it. Therefore, what is the harm in the Central Government implementing it directly ?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : As I stated earlier, as per the unanimous recommendations of the PDS Advisory Committee, now we are referring this matter to the NDC, National Development Council. As soon as the NDC takes a decision, the Central Government will implement it.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : That you have said earlier. Madam, he did not reply to my question. This is concerned with the Central Government. Why are you not doing it ? Why the Advisory Committee ...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : They want to sit together and decide what to do about it, to divide the responsibility between them and the State Governments.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : Therefore, what is their respnosibility ? What is Caesar's is Caesar's. Why are you not doing it ?

श्री एस० एस० सुरजवाला : मैडम, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के बारे में मैं मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा, जो देहात हैं, गांव हैं, जिनमें हरिजन, बेकवर्ड क्लासेस, खेत मजदूर और बैजमीन लोगों की बहुत गिनती है गांव में, वहां पर जो भी इन्होंने स्टोर बना रखे हैं, जो भी डिपो हैं सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के, वह केवल ऐसी वस्तुएं लेकर आते हैं, जो ब्लैक में बिक सकें, उदाहरण के तौर पर चीनी और केरोसिन जो है वह लेकर आएंगे, लेकिन गेहूं लेकर नहीं आएंगे, चावल लेकर नहीं आएंगे, चाय नहीं लेकर आएंगे और साबुन लेकर नहीं आएंगे। .....तो मैं महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या मंत्री महोदय यह विशेष हिदायत जारी करेंगे प्रांतीय सरकारों को कि वे देहात में भी जीवन की वे चीजें उपलब्ध कराएं जिनका आम गरीब आदमी इस्तेमाल करता है।

इसके साथ ही, मैडम, मैं दूसरी बात यह पूछना चाहूंगा, जो इन्होंने पहले सवाल के जवाब में दिया था, उसमें इन्होंने यह बताया था कि :— "Details of the inspection conducted by the Inspecting Officers during the last three years are :"

जो इन्होंने अपने स्टोर का इंस्पेक्शन कंडक्ट किया है, उसमें "1990-91 में 238 stores were inspected 1992 में 221 और 1992-93 मे 127."

तो मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि बजाए इसके कि और ज्यादा विजिलैंस हों, ये इंस्पेक्शन आधे से भी कम रह गए हैं। इसका कोई कारण बताएंगे ?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He had asked a question, number one, whether you are going to make available soaps and other

commodities also through PDS in the rural areas.

SHRI A.K. ANTONY : Madam, various State Governments are already distributing soaps, tea, iodised salt and so many items apart from PDS articles through PDS. In order to help the Tribal people, it is for the State Governments to distribute these commodities through the PDS. From 1991 onwards, the Central Government have started a new scheme, namely, RPDS. It is meant entirely for the Tribal people.... (*Interruptions*) ... I am not evading. I am mentioning that responsibility for implementation at the field level is entirely with the State Governments. We will not be able to interfere or direct in this matter We can only give guidelines. We are in constant touch with the State Governments with regard to improvement of the PDS. Whenever there is any requirement from the Central Government, we are always here to help the State Governments.

Now the question of lifting stocks is there and it is poor. Even though we are allowing large quantities, that much quantity is not being lifted in any State. Now that is the problem.

SHRI S.S. SURJEWALA : He has not followed my question.

May I know from the hon. Minister, whether he would issue instructions to the State Governments to include items like soap, tea, wheat and rice in the PDS shops in the villages ?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He said that he will advise the State Governments. If the State Governments are willing to sell them, he will do it. If the State Governments do not want to sell them, then, he cannot force them. (Ends)

श्री ब्रह्मदेव आनन्द पासवान : मैडम, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि क्वेश्चन नम्बर 153 सेम कैसे है, इसी में जोड़ लिया जाए ।

उपसभापति : अलग-अलग है । अलग-अलग चीजें जुड़ नहीं सकती, एक जैसी होती तो जुड़ सकती थी ।

*145. [*The questioner (Shri V. Gopalsamy) was absent for answer vide Col ... infra*]

Economic Cooperation Agreement with EEC

*146. **SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD :†**
SHRI N.E. BALARAM :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have entered into an economic cooperation agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) ; and

(b) If so, the details thereof and in what manner it is going to improve our trade position ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE : (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) Negotiations for a new cooperation Agreement between Indian and the EEC have been concluded. The Agreement has not been signed is yet.

(b) The new Agreement seeks to broaden the cope for economic cooperation to cover a wide range of subject including trade.

SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD : Madam, practically there is no reply to my question. My question was, "If so, the details thereof and in what manner it is going to improve our trade position ?" According to the Minister's reply, the trade between the EEC and India naturally will have some boost. But what are the details ? Though the agreement has not yet been signed it was concluded. The Government is already in the know of the things. In what direction is the trade going to be improved ? I want to know what the details are.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : Madam, this agreement is going to be signed on the 20th December, 1993. The hon.

† The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri N. Giri Prasad.